13a

000

Press Section, Baltic Area of the Lithuanian Liberation Army. An underground newspaper in the process of printing in a forest.

876 626 Lithuanian language, but in Vilnius classes are bilingual. Technological training is favored from the top, and students themselves elect such classes for practical reasons. The Marxist-Leninist "science" is obligatory. Nevertheless, of 2,000 students of the University of Kaunas, only 13 were members of the Komsomol in the school year 1947-48.

883 665 The Komsomol (Communist Youth organization) —just vegetates: there are few Lithuanian recruits. These are found in the cities only. The Komsomol had enjoyed some success during the early days of the second occupation as a "security measure." However, when the authorities began employing the Komsomol personnel for repression, espionage, grain collection supervision, etc., the ranks dwindled. The *Komsorgs* (Komsomol organizers) are pressuring students to join the Komsomol and school directors second the efforts, but there is practically no response: in schools of 500 pupils, only a dozen or so, mostly children of non-Lithuanian race, belong to the Komsomol.

Membership in the "Pioneers"—the parody of boy scouting—is not obligatory but school authorities warn the parents to enroll their children.

In Kindergartens, communist and anti-religious propaganda is forced on little children, and teachers slyly attempt to enlist the little ones as informers on their parents and friends.

Forcible Collectivization and Duplicity

●423 Unbelievable official duplicity is practiced by the Kremlin. Thus, *Izvestiya*, the official organ of the Soviet Government, in the issue No. 172 of 22 July 1948 wrote:

"The Agrarian Reform has been consummated in Lithuania. 92,000 former smallholders and the landless have received gratuitously FOR ALL TIME 659,000 hectares of land, tens of thousands horses and cows, over 100,000 houses and other farm structures.

"Prior to the completion of harvesting, over 250 kolkhozes were found in the country."

The final phrase presaged the forcible drive against the "smallholders and the landless" from whom land was seized and redistributed in order to provide statistical data to show a great Soviet "achievement," prior to driving the expropriated "recipients of the land FOR ALL TIME" into the kolkhozes. And yet,

14

● 423 so many solemn assurances had been made on the highest authority that there would be no collectivization. . . .

The Russians well realize that collectivization means a decrease of production and a lowering of living standards. But the Soviet regime—materialistic in all its aspects—does not concern itself with materialistic calculations in its drive for forcible collectization: collectivization is a part of the "ideological drive." That is, a part of perfecting the POLICE REGIME.

There were no "estate owners" or "peasants" in Lithuania: Lithuanian agriculturists were all dignified and self-respecting medium and small FARMERS, HUSBANDMEN, who produced enough to maintain comfortable living standards, provided gradual accumulation of farming machinery, earned income enabling them to send their children to universities. They entered specialized fields of production—dairying, cattle breeding, sugar beet production, fowl raising, pig breeding, etc. Lithuanian agricultural economy enabled the country to export annually increasing quantities of the highest grade butter, eggs, cheese, hams, bacon, canned meat, frozen meats, flax, bristles, casings, lard, etc. The farmers lived in isolated homesteads, rather than in Russian-type clustered villages. They enjoyed privacy in their homes surrounded by orchards and flower gardens and crosses.

But, from the Soviet point of view, individual farming tends to maintain "rugged individualism," independent thinking, self-reliance, self-respect, dislike of a police interference. Production by independent farmers cannot be controlled by the most precisely calculated estimates—and the Russians are thinking in terms of simple grain production, rather than specialized varieties of agriculture. Russian officials can never be certain whether the last ounce had been squeezed from an independent farmer.

And a farmer living in his isolated homestead escapes the continual surveillance of the MVD network of spies! Walking off to his orchard, garden or grove, he could maintain liaison with the "people's enemies" and "political bandits"—and every independent-thinking Lithuanian is either a "political bandit" or a "people's enemy" in the Soviet mentality. He could supply the "bandits" with food or clothing, or shelter them at night. This is the most "criminal" aspect of individual farming.

474 In the kolkhoz—it is quite different.

626 Hundreds of families are herded into a closely guarded enclosure where each person is assigned so much "living space" and has no choice in selecting either the "breathing space" or room mates. A few dozen armed MVD troops guard the huge estate bared of all tree vegetation. There is no chance for "hoarding" or secreting a part of the production which is checked in the field by Party officials. No one can enter or leave unnoticed and unquestioned. Every fifth person is an agent informer of the MVD. No one can leave at night or maintain any contacts unsurveyed by the MVD. Everyone can be depended upon to report dutifully for casting his or her ballot at periodic "elections." No one owns any property, except the few pieces of furniture, bedding and personal rags. No one can read the clandestine press unobserved by the agents. No one can own a radio set or listen to clandestine broadcasts. There are "red corners" supplied with ample official propaganda literature and a radio

17a

000 How tired he looked! His cheekbones protruding, his face yellow, nothing but rags on his emaciated body. And yet—his head was high and he looked straight ahead! He marched as a soldier past the reviewing stand. I was proud of him: he meant what he used to say in those good old days: "Don't be like reeds swaying in the wind. Be firm, be individual personalities!"

"Detained but a month ago, there he was marching past my window to Siberia. . . . He reeled. . . . His comrades quickly grasped him—and the professor marched again, with heavier steps. . . . The column disappeared in the growing dusk. . . .

"I waited by the window. The cursing and stray shots of soldiers died down. . . . I descended to the street and walked toward the railway depot—maybe I could see him once again—just to impart my farewell through eyes.

"But cruel Mongol faces blocked the approaches. I stopped—looked around. An old woman peered anxiously at the long train seen in the distance. A young woman with unshed tears stood nearby. . . .

"Several MVD soldiers came forth and shouted to run for our lives. As they spoke, bullets ricocheted from the walls overhead. . . We ran. . . .

"I found myself climbing the stairs to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Aukros Vartai. I knelt and begged Our Lady to help us in our present misfortune. . . .

"Suddenly, as the train whistled, I heard singing from a distance. Our exiles were singing that great hymn of Lithuania: *"Dievas mūsų gelbėtojas ir stiprybė. . . ."* (God, our shelter and strength!)"

Economic Oppression

Latvia and Estonia had been subdued prior to 1948 and little resistance had been offered to the forcible collectivization. Lithuania suffered heavy blows throughout 1948, mostly due to the desperate resistance against collectivization and terror. A proud and stubborn people steeped in traditional sense of human dignity, self-respect, passion for their native soil, for Christianity, and despising the exhibitionist masters of the country—cannot be broken! THE LITHUANIANS WILL EITHER REGAIN THEIR FREEDOM—OR DIE TO THE LAST MAN! Living in individual homesteads or in kolkhozes, they will—unlike the Russians—sporadically rebel whenever the limit of their patience will be reached and their sense of dignity outraged. Russian sadism and cruelty will not affect the people's determination.

[181]

● 423 656 In 1948, the life of independent farmers was not easy. The land was nationalized. The norm of land parcels left to private "management" by former owners varied in the districts. Arable land was evaluated according to the scale of "third-class land," and a production equivalent of up to 30 hectares was left to private "exploitation." Where the land is of better grade, plots are smaller. Wherever the communists tagged a "people's enemy" classification on the owner, only 5 ha. of land were left.

Norms of compulsory levies "in nature" also vary. The quota is assessed per hectare, and the norm for persons with larger plots is greater per hectare than that levied on managers of smaller plots. A cow-owning urban dweller who does not own a single square foot of soil, must deliver 12 kilograms of butter annually to the state. Payment for "tax in nature" de-

18

423 456 liveries is niggardly. For instance, 2 pre-reform rubles were paid for a hundredweight of rye, but the state resold the grain to the worker as baked bread at the rate of 3.5 rubles per kilogram. In the black market, the hundredweight of rye sold for 1,200 rubles.

Failure to meet the assessed produce quotas is harshly penalized: cattle are confiscated, families are dispossessed and sentenced to several years of "loss of freedom" at hard labor in concentration camps. And a farmer deals with *two governments*: in daytime with the Russians, at night—with the Lithuanian underground authorities.

A farmer managing 30 ha. farm, must deliver 4,000 kilograms of grains, 4,500 kg. of potatoes, 800 kg. of meat, and specified amounts of hay, wool, eggs, butter and milk to the state. Terms are fixed for such deliveries, usually between fall and Christmas. However, [461] local Executive Committees pay no attention to the fixed terms: they engage in "socialistic competition" to surpass each other in making record deliveries and set the high mark of "voluntary contributions in excess of the quotas." Fixed contingents are not enough: excess quotas are fixed and announced, by armed militiamen, to the exploited farmer as "voluntarily assumed duties of the area inhabitants," plus "voluntary sales to the state" of about 20% in excess of the quota. Detachments of militia ravage the countryside collecting the levies ahead of time. Once the quotas and excess quotas are met,—a distant "sister republic" somewhere in the Altais "challenges" Lithuania to a "socialistic competition." Immediately, tens of thousands of militia and MVD troops descend on the poor farmers to seize "voluntary contributions" in addition to negligently exposed wristwatches, cash, suits, etc. The waylaying of women and girls begins, etc. If "challenges" are repeated, new waves of armed official robbers descend. . . .

This shameless policy of exploitation ruins the farmer. He no longer has bread nor seeds, and is glad to get away from the armed communist terrorists and to settle on a kolkhoz or anywhere out of reach of the collectors of "voluntarily assumed quotas"—but he is fooled, as challenges to "socialistic competition" by distant kolkhozes omit no one. . . . Nothing at all is paid sometimes for the seized stocks, even though the collectors possess signed receipts of payment. And all the time the harrassed farmer must listen to Russian profanity and hear himself called "people's enemy," "kulak," "saboteur," "reactionary," "exploiter," etc.

[511] Workers employed in the kolkhozes and sovkhozes receive but 10% of the minimum standard of living. For this reason, every inhabitant of a state-operated farm and institution MUST steal to protect his family from hunger and nakedness.

The duty of providing "stoykas" is very oppressive. Farmers must provide carriages and horses for postal deliveries, to transport government officials and their Katyushas from place to place, to cut and tote fixed contingents of timber, to transport grain contingents, carry gravel and repair the roads, etc. Of course, a member of the family must accompany the cart. During the German occupation, it was safer for women to accompany the carts. But no woman of any age may risk exposure to Russians. . . . Occasionally the driver and the horse disappear for months—transporting officials to distant places or carting materials for mili-

423 tary constructions. A family owning one horse must
656 transport 30 cords of timber to fixed stations. The owner of two horses must double the quota, in winter.

[311] In 1947, about 40% of arable land of Lithuania was unplanted, and the diet of the rural population suffered a catastrophic decline. Few tractors are available. Threshing machines were nationalized. Bribes are required to gain any assistance from the Russian managers of the MTS stations—and people prefer not to deal with the drunken and greedy representatives of the "master race." Forests are systematically destroyed and forest fires are not combatted. The MVD-MGB troops quite frequently set fire to the forests in order to "smoke out" guerrillas.

There was even less incentive to work for Russia in 1948. At least one half of the arable land went untilled. . . .

Industry

433 Peat production dropped to one-third of the level
377 of the German occupation period. Very little coal is brought to the country. For these reasons, there is a severe shortage of electric power. City dwellers must provide their own heating—for apartments, institutions and schools.

The official press occasionally reports that certain officials "abuse their office" by driving to some village, demolishing "deserted homes" and forcing the neighboring farmers to transport the lumber to the city as fuel. . . . Due to the prevalent bureaucracy and chaos, government buildings and student dormitories go unheated for weeks. Therefore, dormitory inhabitants or the office force of this or that institution mobilize and follow the example of the dignitaries: they descend on and transport deserted homes (in parts) in a "socialistic competition" to keep themselves warm. . . .

433 Brick production dropped for lack of skilled man-
[337] power. The brick works of Rokai and Palemõnas produce for the army exclusively. No bricks and no tiles are available for sale to private citizens. Therefore, bricks and tiles figure in a lively black market exchange for horses.

Not a single cement plant is in operation—except on paper, in the boastful reports of "achievements" of the Russian dignitaries. The cement plants of Akmenė and Skirsnemunė are still in the stage of paper planning, though included in the five-year plan to be consummatted by 1950.

[288] The textile plants of Klaipėda are idle. The Drobė plant of Kaunas is under reconstruction. The Litex and Audiniai plants began operating. The Linas plant produces for export to Russia exclusively.

The hide tanning plants of Šiauliai and the glass factories of Radviliškis and Aleksotas are operating. Dairies were mostly reactivated. The huge Maistas stockyards and canneries were burned down in Kaunas, and feeble efforts at reconstruction are forging ahead. The Maistas plant in Panevėžys is operating but production is small. The plant at Tauragė still lies in ruins.

The beet sugar refineries of Marijampolė and Panevėžys resumed operations. The paper and cardboard plant produces inferior quality products. The railway yards and repair shops of Kaunas are being expanded. The factories, as a rule, produce for war and export to Russia. The present production level amounts to less than 50% of the 1939 level.

tactics in combatting religion. 19 21A

Soviet Methods

Dr. Ladas Natkevičius, the late Lithuanian Minister to the Kremlin, was asked by Stalin in 1939, during the so-called "negotiations for a Mutual Assistance Pact," how great was the influence of the clergy in Lithuania. When he was told that the clergy of all Christian denominations enjoy great authority among the faithful, the Generalissimo thoughtfully remarked —"That is *very important to know.*"

At the time the remark passed unnoticed. A Soviet invasion was not anticipated because of the frequently professed Soviet friendship for Lithuania and Lithuania's excellent record in discharging all treaty obligations.

But the significance of this remark was quite apparent when Justas Paleckis, the puppet "president of Soviet Lithuania," bade farewell to Dr. Hildebrandt, a noted German newspaperman. Paleckis told the departing German quite frankly that he had received instructions from the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to apply no *direct* pressure on the clergy.

The Soviet regime always fought religion and its institutions, but its tactical methods were different during both occupations.

The First Occupation—Oppression at Full Tempo

Immediately after the first total occupation of the Baltic States in June 1940, uniform steps were applied by the three satraps of the Kremlin dispatched to liquidate the sovereign Republics: Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs Dekanozov in Lithuania, Deputy-Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyshynsky in Latvia and Politbureau member Zhdanov in Estonia. The Concordats with the Vatican were abruptly and unilaterally broken off and the Papal Nunzios were expelled.

Then followed the elimination of religion from public life. The Catholic and Protestant Theology-Philosophy Faculties of the University of Lithuania at Kaunas were closed; all Catholic cultural, educational and social welfare organizations, newspapers and publishing concerns were abolished and their properties confiscated; teaching of religion was eliminated from schools; army, school, hospital and prison chaplains were summarily dismissed; crucifixes and other religious insignia were removed from schools, courts and public places and desecrated.

Then came the application of the nationalization decree: buildings, landholdings, workshops, libraries, private hospitals and schools, orphanages, kindergar-

[423] tens and personal property owned by institutions and organizations of a religious character were sequestered. In nationalizing land, parishes were given only 5 hectares—although other landlords retained 30 hectares. Buildings owned by parishes and bishoprics, including episcopal residences and seminaries, libraries, printing shops, printed stocks of books were confiscated. Denominational grammar schools, high schools, orphanages, kindergartens and hospitals were converted into state institutions. The stocks of missals, hymnals, prayer-books, rosaries, religious pictures, and other religious articles found stored in book shops and retail stores were desecrated or destroyed.

The Soviets considered the clergy a separate "caste," antagonistic to the proletariat and, therefore, to be eliminated. The clergy as well as independent farmers (called '*kulaks*'), were oppressed economically; priests and "cult servants" were heavily taxed. For instance, a tolerated "proletarian" with a monthly income of 200 rubles paid 30 rubles monthly for living space assigned to him, while "cult servants" of the same income class paid 220 rubles monthly, and those with incomes of 350 rubles paid 388 rubles.

The Communist Party proposed to levy excessive license fees on churches, similar to motion picture house and cabaret assessments. The taxes depended on the size of the church. Such taxes were already imposed in the sections of Poland annexed to Russia—20,000 to 50,000 rubles. A commissar explained the policy to a pastor of a Lithuanian parish in eastern Lithuania which was annexed by Russia in 1939: "If you can't pay—close down your shop." Consequently, the churches were to be closed by degrees for nonpayment of taxes.

The Party also passed a decision to convert the centrally located Garrison Church of Kaunas into a "Revolutionary Museum." The Museum of Church Art was liquidated and its exhibits, the antique vestments, were used by Red Army troopers to polish their boots.

All that was public anti-religious action. The other phase, shrouded in secrecy, was directed against individual members of the clergy.

The Party instructed its agents to disrupt the internal discipline of churchmen, to enlist agent-informers among the clergymen, to antagonize priests against each other or to compromise them. NKGB Major Gladkov issued a secret directive dated 21 October 1940, directed to all county security chiefs, to institute unbroken surveillance of priests, church employees, friars and nuns, and to enlist students of upper classes for espionage on the private lives of the clergymen. "Remember that some of the priests are not provided for materially and are wavering in their ideological outlook." The secret order of 21 January 1941 directed particular attention to individual discontent and antagonism among members of religious organizations: advantage should be taken of such incidents to disrupt the organizations.

After digesting the reports of weakness exhibited by some individual priests, People's Commissar of Justice, Pranas Pakarklis, a native traitor, offered attractive offices to a number of priests, on condition that

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

Since 1924–25 the policy has been changed and the countries of central Europe have returned to the pre-war methods of tariff protection of their cereal production as well as to the protection of their animal husbandry. This has contributed to duplication in production and to the narrowing of the world market for exported agricultural products, while other factors stimulated the further expansion of agricultural production in the surplus-exporting countries. Exports from agricultural and raw-material producing countries increased very little during the years of prosperity because there was no appreciable increase in the demand for these products in the industrial countries. At the same time, the imports of agricultural countries, consisting mainly of manufactured goods, rose rapidly. The payment balance of agricultural countries could be kept in equilibrium only by an increase in indebtedness or by drawing on the surplus of previous years. For example, in 1924 Lithuania's exports exceeded imports by 60 million litas, while in 1927 imports exceeded exports by 19.8 million litas and in 1938 by 34.2 million litas.[6]

Data on economic activities in Lithuania cover the period up to 1939. With the war of 1939 another period of "disturbed economic development" started; no attempt can be made to analyze this period in this volume, since economic conditions are very unstable and data on economic activities unavailable.

LAND REFORM

One of the factors that contributed most to a complete overhauling of the internal economic and social structure of Lithuania was the land reform, a question which was

[6] Exchange rate: 10 litas to $1.00 until 1933; 6 litas to $1.00, 1935–40.

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

raised as far back as 1905 by the Lithuanian deputies at the Vilnius diet. That there was a need for reform can be seen from the fact that before the World War, about 450 families possessed 3.5 million acres or 22 percent of all the land. Each of these possessed at least 2,000 acres.[7]

To analyze the political, economic, and social conditions which caused the great part of the land to fall into the hands of a few landlords would require extensive and long study. It may be pointed out, however, that land conveyance was not always effected in an honest way; too often, transfer was forced on peasants by depriving them of owners' rights and making them merely tenants. After the unsuccessful uprisings against the Russian government in 1831 and again in 1863, many participants were sent to Siberia and their lands were confiscated. Some of these lands were later divided into small parcels and distributed among the Russian colonists, while other lands were consolidated into estates (*latifundia*) and, by special decrees of October 4–16, 1835, and December 6, 1842, turned over to families of Russian nobility as *entailed estates*. An estate in this category could not be sold, but, upon the death of the owner, passed on to his eldest son. It was these frozen estates that were the first to be affected by the land reform begun by the Provisional Government of Lithuania in 1918.[8]

It was ordered that all land converted by the Russian decrees of 1835 and 1842 into entailed estates should temporarily be made the state property of Lithuania, to be dis-

[7] Stasys Elsbergas, *Lietuvos Zemes Reforma* (Land Reform of Lithuania), Kaunas, 1935, p. 7.

[8] Salkauskas, K. *Lietuvos Novelos. Veikiančiuju 1935. III. 16 d. Lietuvos istatymu ir isakymu, paskelbtu Vyriausybes Ziniose 1–476 rinkinys* (The Novels of Lithuania. The Laws and Orders of Lithuania, Published in the Government Gazette No. 1–476, Which Are in Force on March 16, 1935), Spaudos Fondas, Kaunas, 1935, p. 324.

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

posed of eventually by distribution among the landless and the small landowners (those having not more than 12 acres).[9] This decree was legalized by the Preliminary Land Reform Law of August 18, 1920, and its scope was broadened to permit the republic of Lithuania to assume also the ownership of private forests that were larger than 25 *desimtines* (one *desimtine* is equal to about 2.7 acres).[10] This law was a tentative one in that it contained no provision for the distribution of the expropriated property.

The Land Reform Law in its final draft, consisting of twelve sections and subdivided into seventy-seven paragraphs, was ratified in 1922.[11] The first section outlines the composition of the lands reserved for distribution, defining particularly the land to be taken into the distribution reserve. This action also enabled the state to take over the private property of those who had served in the post-war German armed bands of Bermont and Virgolicz and of those who had worked or were still working against the independence of Lithuania. Estates exceeding 200 acres and owned by one person or one family were also to be taken for land reform purposes.[12] Later the limit was raised to 321 acres (150 hectares). The second section of the Land Reform Law provides that the biggest and least active estates shall be among the first to be appropriated for land reform purposes. The third section defines the types of prospective recipients of the reapportioned land parcels. It states mainly that heads of families of landless peasants, farm laborers, and small landowners are entitled to share in the land distribution. Those farmers, or their lawful successors, from whom land was

[9] Elsbergas, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[10] *Vyriausybes Zinios*, Nr. 45 ell. 454 (Government Gazette No. 45, Part 454). Hereafter referred to as V.Z.

[11] *Ibid.*, Nr. 83 ell. 721.

[12] *Ibid.*, Nr. 324 ell. 2218.

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

seized by the government in 1861 and 1863 are to receive priority over all others. Each head of a family may receive not more than 49.4 acres (20 hectares). Land is also to be distributed to public schools, schools of agriculture, and other institutions of learning and culture as well as to hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums, and other social and public organizations.

The land is divided into four classes, graded according to the fertility of the soil. The new owners have to pay equal annual installments for their land for thirty-six years. The rate to be paid varies from 180 to 252 litas per hectare (2.471 acres) for first-class land, depending on its location; 90 to 126 litas for second-class; 36 to 54 litas for third-class, and 18 to 27 litas for fourth-class. No interest accumulates on the unpaid balance except on due shares which are not paid in the time prescribed.[13]

The only recipients of land exempted from all payments are volunteer soldiers in the Lithuanian war for independence and their families.

Former owners of the lands taken for land reform purposes were entitled to compensation. Payment was to be made with government bonds bearing three percent interest and redeemable at any time not later than thirty-six years from the date of issue. Paragraph 58 of the Land Reform Law prescribes that the compensation for the land shall be a fair price based on valuations existing in the period between 1910 and 1914. As the Land Reform Law was passed on April 3, 1922, when *Obost* marks [14] were in circulation, the compensation was to be paid in this currency. (One Russian ruble was made equal to two *Obost* marks.) Paragraph 59 provides that the highest amount paid may not exceed

[13] Salkauskas, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–32.
[14] See, p. 102 below, section on Finance.

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

423 425 [452] 480 marks per hectare. Because the mark fell in value, the reward was comparatively small when translated into litas. It is estimated that the total amount paid by the government for expropriated land up to 1935 was 40 million litas.

In accordance with this law, the land transfer up to the end of 1939 involved 1,774,099 acres (717,968 hectares), of which a substantial part was handed over for cultural and other public uses, being given for schools, cemeteries, municipalities, public playgrounds, and so on.

TABLE 6

THE LAND INVOLVED FOR REDISTRIBUTION BETWEEN 1919 AND 1939

	ACRES
I. Land distributed for permanent ownership	
1. To private schools, organizations, asylums, etc.	2,291
2. To parish churches	3,981
3. For cemeteries	1,003
4. To employees and laborers for homes	8,110
5. To new settlers	893,392
6. Added to small farms	222,951
TOTAL	1,131,728
II. Land distributed for temporary use	
1. To public schools and other governmental institutions	86,070
2. To municipalities and their institutions (hospitals, asylums, public parks, etc.)	6,158
3. To private persons and organizations	26,539
4. For community pastures	72,170
TOTAL	190,937
III. For miscellaneous uses	451,434
GRAND TOTAL OF LAND AFFECTED BY THE LAND REFORM ACT	1,774,099

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

According to the agricultural census of 1930, the number of farms in Lithuania and their areas are as stated in Table 7.

TABLE 7

CENSUS OF FARMS

FARM SIZE (*Acres*)	NUMBER OF FARMS	COMBINED AREA (*Acres*)
2.5– 12.5	53,463	380,722
12.5– 25.0	78,237	1,440,338
25.0– 37.5	59,572	1,788,349
37.5– 50.0	33,236	1,408,275
50.0– 75.0	34,197	2,042,511
75.0–125.0	20,597	1,885,111
125.0–250.0 and over	8,078	1,725,742
TOTAL	287,380	10,671,048

Through the land reform, over 45,000 new farms have been established and over 200,000 persons (including new settlers and their families) have been provided with regular occupation and permanent homes. This undoubtedly has brought beneficial results to the social and economic life of the country.[15] Moreover, the land reform has undoubtedly been a means of substantially raising the country's productivity, to the benefit of both the state and the individual farmer.

When Soviet Russia occupied Lithuania on June 15, 1940, a still more radical "land reform" was proclaimed by the Soviet-appointed puppet government. All land was proclaimed state property. Consequently, the farmer-owners suddenly became only managers of government property and, therefore, could not sell, exchange, or give away their

[15] Kriksciunas, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Elbergas, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–68.

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

423 471 656 land. Seventy-four acres (30 hectares) was the maximum allowed each family to manage.

Several thousand formerly landless farmers who obtained a few acres through this Soviet "land reform" and whose popular support the Soviet government was seeking found themselves unable to till the allotted land because they had no tools, seed, or livestock and could not secure any aid from the government. The Soviet policy was to force them all into so-called "collective farms" (kolkhoz).

The majority of the farms of 80 hectares (198 acres) or over were not distributed at all but converted into government farms (sovkhoz) controlled through commissars.

Those who were allowed to keep 30 hectares (74 acres) were called "kulaks," and such high taxes were imposed upon them that they were forced to join the government-fostered collective farms.

241 423 656 As indicated by Table 7, before the Soviet Russian occupation there were 287,380 separate farms in Lithuania, ranging in area from 2.5 to 250 acres. These farms, on the basis of productive capacity, were classified into three groups.

The first group was comprised of the self-sufficient farms, ranging in acreage from 2.50 to 30 acres. Farmers in this group raised sufficient grain to maintain their families and kept one or two horses for work, one to four milk cows, and some poultry; thus they themselves produced most of their food. They had little to sell and bought little from the town. At the end of 1939, about 160,000 farms or 56 percent of all farms of Lithuania were in this group.

The second group was comprised of farms of between 30 and 70 acres which produced substantial quantities of agricultural products for the market. Although the farming system of this group was similar to that of the first one to the

3: Simutis S-4 (no date) 1942 RB5 Lithuanians

extent that these farmers produced various kinds of agricultural products, they usually concentrated more specially on one branch of farming, such as dairying or grain raising. About 100,000 farms belonged to this group.

Farms exceeding 70 acres belonged to the third group and stood highest in independent Lithuania from the point of view of the quality and quantity of their products. There were about 27,000 farms in this group. It was mainly this and the second group which supplied the bulk of agricultural products for export. It was also this third group and to a degree the second which first felt the ruin of Sovietization. Most of the farms in the third group were reduced to not more than 74 acres so that the farming inventory and buildings were not suitable to the smaller parcels of land. A substantial part of them was converted into government farms (*sovkhoz*). At the same time pressure was put on the second group by imposing exorbitant taxes in order to make it disintegrate as rapidly as possible.

Taking into consideration the area of land utilized by each group, it might be deduced that in normal times the first group produced 20 percent of the entire amount sold on the market, while the second and third groups produced the remaining 80 percent, or 40 percent each. From this it would appear that the capacity of agricultural production in Lithuania during the Soviet Russian occupation dropped at least 40 percent.

When the Germans occupied Lithuania in June, 1941, they found the Bolshevik-introduced system convenient to some extent for the expropriation of the country economically. They restored the system of private ownership, but had not returned, up to the end of 1941, farms to the original owners. Even those farmers who were left managers of their small

423 farms (not exceeding 74 acres) during the Sovietization were not reëstablished as owners but were continued as managers, so that the German masters might conveniently remove them from the farms at any moment.

Latest unofficial reports indicate that several hundred German managers have been sent to Lithuania to manage the former government farms. Apparently Germans are keeping the bigger farms for colonization in the event they win this second world war. No doubt, it will take several years after this war to regain the degree of agricultural production achieved during the peace period after 1918.

COÖPERATIVES

474 Coöperatives are the backbone of progress and of economic reconstruction in Lithuania. Although the first cooperative societies in Lithuania originated as far back as the end of the eighteenth century, the wider coöperative movement was begun only in 1881, when the first consumer cooperative societies were organized by I. Ivanavicius. Ivanavicius acknowledges that his inspiration for coöperative work was obtained through traveling in Western Europe —Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. He was the initiator and a member of the first coöperative dairy society, Birute, which was organized in 1889 and of which large and influential landowners of the district of Raseiniai were members. In 1912 there were in Lithuania 52 consumer coöperative societies with 8,193 members. For better coördination in this work, these individual coöperative societies attempted to establish a central organization, but they were refused permission by the Russian government.[16]

[16] Petras Salcius, *Kooperacija; Kooperacijos paskaitu kursas* (Coöperation; Lectures on Coöperation), Kaunas, 1931, p. 195.

11:League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

this circumstance and remained inferior to that of the more progressive countries of Western Europe. Most of her peasant farmers, who were not released from serfdom until 1862-1865, were still living under the same conditions as in the Middle Ages. They owned narrow strips of land, practised the old three-year crop rotation, had common grazing land in a very neglected condition, bred only native stock and relied almost exclusively on cereal crops. Farming methods were thus very primitive and the farmer's income very small, while the houses were almost entirely of wood with thatched or wooden roofs.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, intellectuals, who were still few in number, began to take an interest in rural life : they cut up part of the communal land to form separate farms, organised more paying forms of activity, carried on active propaganda for the improvement of rural dwellings and encouraged the introduction of more rational methods of work. Their efforts met invariably with systematic opposition from the Russian Government.

During the world war, Lithuania was for many months the scene of hostilities. From 1915 to the end of 1918, the Germans occupied the country, which was the victim of requisitions of all kinds and lost much of its wealth.

The Proclamation of Lithuanian independence was followed by a strong movement of national renaissance and rural reconstruction. The Government's task was a difficult one. Tremendous efforts were made to build up a country which was just emerging from war; farming methods were improved and land reform was instituted. Communal land was redistributed, undeveloped estates were broken up, new branches of agriculture were developed — dairying, pig-breeding, poultry-farming; numerous schools of agriculture were founded, such roads as existed were rebuilt, and new means of communication were opened. In a word, the farmer's life was to be reorganised on modern lines. True, not all these ideals have proved capable of fulfilment in so short a time; but great strides have been made, and present day agriculture in Lithuania differs profoundly from the pre-war conditions obtaining in that country.

* * *

Lithuania now consists in the main of small and medium-sized rural properties. A farm of 5 or 6 hectares provides an adequate livelihood for an average working farmer's family. An estate of 80 or 100 hectares is also regarded as a working peasant's farm, as it is generally run by the owner in person. Farms ranging from 5 to 100 hectares account for over 90% of the agricultural land. Miniature farms up to 2 hectares represent only 0.44% of the area under cultivation, which is all

11: League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

to the good, as such farms generally contribute nothing towards agricultural production and are far from being a social asset. There are no latifundia in Lithuania. The largest estate comprises about 1,000 hectares, and the larger properties exceeding 100 hectares number only 1602, or 0.56% of the total farms.

The proportion of men and women in the rural population is about equal. The country people do not go to the towns in search of work, as urban and country dwellers carry on different trades and their lives are quite separate.

An old barn.

The soil is of average fertility. In the east and south-east, there is a small area which is sandy and not very fertile, while, in the north again, a small area consists of very fertile land. The vast plains of Lithuania are covered with clay — more or less light — deposited during the Ice Age and subjected to centuries of erosion and impoverishment.

The rainfall is fairly heavy, so that much of this low-lying land necessitates drainage works. The State makes itself responsible for the large-scale regularisation of rivers and watercourses and the cutting of drainage channels. The farmers are responsible, with the help of Government subsidies, for ditching and drain-laying on water-logged land. By no means all of the land is satisfactorily drained. The yield cannot

11:League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

I. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

162 Lithuania is essentially an agricultural country : the 1923 census showed that 76.7% of the inhabitants live in the rural areas and are occupied in agriculture. According to estimates [161] based on the most recent statistics, the total population on January 1st, 1938, was 2,549,668.

At the time of the agricultural census of 1930, the total [423] area (including forest and land not under cultivation) of the agricultural undertakings (287,380) with an area of over 1 hectare was 4,318,514 hectares. As no more recent data are available, it is impossible to calculate the exact density of the rural population or the extent of migration from the country to the [166] towns since 1923. It is, however, clear that, as a result of industrial developments, many landless agricultural labourers have settled in the towns in recent years.

342

A Lithuanian house.

11: League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

II. LAND TENURE AND AGRARIAN REFORM

When the Lithuanian State was revived in 1918, two-thirds of the land under peasant ownership consisted of holdings split up into a large number of separate strips and plots. (Detailed plans of villages before and after the subdivision of village lands into self-contained holdings are to be found in M. V. Balčiūnas' work *Lietuvos kaimų žemės tvarkymas istorijos, ūkio ir statistikos šviesoj*, published by the Central Land Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Kaunas, 1938, pages 156 to 158.) At that time, moreover, almost every village had common pasture-land and much of the land was subject to servitudes in the form of pasture and forest rights. The peasants were entitled to pasture their stock on land belonging to the great landed estates and to receive a given quantity of wood from their forests.

In the early years of the country's independence, the Government took steps with a view to the consolidation of holdings, a process which entailed the subdivision of village lands into self-contained undertakings and the abolition of common pasture-lands and servitudes. Subdivision was required

Farm established in pursuance of agrarian reform.

11:League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

423 in some 9,600 villages with a total area of 1,974,000 hectares. By 1938, 6,096 villages, with a total area of 1,491,475 hectares, had actually been subdivided into 139,551 self-contained undertakings. Thus, 3,500 villages, with a total area of 516,500 hectares, have still to be subdivided, and it is expected that the process will be completed in from four to five years. In all the villages subdivided, the common pasture-lands have been abolished. Furthermore, servitudes have been done away with in regard to a total area of approximately 100,000 hectares; the owners of pasture rights received compensation in land and the owners of forest rights were compensated in land, trees or cash.

241 This consolidation of holdings freed the peasants of villages that had been subdivided from the necessity for a common system of crop rotation for the entire village, and more particularly the system of three-shift rotation, with its well-known drawbacks; this has greatly facilitated cultivation and other agricultural work, and has brought about a state of things more conducive to agricultural improvements, etc.

423 The consolidation of holdings was one of the two most important aspects of agrarian reform in Lithuania, the other being the provision, out of the big estates, of land for peasants who previously had none, and for small landowners who required more.

In the early days of independence, the distribution of the land as between the various types of agricultural undertaking was anomalous. While from a third to half of all the land in the country was in the hands of large landowners, many of the peasants, being unprovided, or insufficiently provided, with land, had no outlet for their activities and lacked a regular means of livelihood. According to the data collected in 1919 preparatory to the introduction of agrarian reform, there were, in round figures, 60,000 landless peasants and 40,000 smallholders who had applied for land. At the same time, the large estates could no longer be kept up, particularly in consequence of the serious losses suffered by their owners during the war, and were fated to give way to small and medium-sized undertakings (see the International Institute of Agriculture's publication, *La Réforme Agraire*, I, Rome, 1930, pages 58 and 59).

In pursuance of the agrarian reforms, some 35,000 new undertakings with a total area of 350,000 hectares were created out of the land belonging to the big estates and some 90,000 hectares were distributed among approximately 26,000 smallholders. (Land was also given to schools, various cultural and social organisations, etc.)

As a result, large numbers of agricultural labourers were raised from economic conditions which were truly deplorable to a position of independence in the country's economic life. In

11: League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

addition, the restoration of social peace in the rural areas brought about general conditions more conducive to an improvement in the rural population's standard of living. 423

It should further be mentioned that the Ministry of Agriculture has drafted a law regulating the ownership of land. The draft provides for certain minimum limits beyond which the subdivision of agricultural undertakings may not be carried (6 hectares of first-grade land, 9 hectares of second-grade land, 12 hectares of third-grade land and 18 hectares of fourth-grade land). The purpose of this measure is to prevent the unrestricted partition (on succession) and the alienation piecemeal of the small agricultural holdings of the rational type created on the occasion of the agrarian reform (creation of new undertakings and subdivision of village lands into self-contained holdings), so as to prevent the formation of enclaves, the subsequent elimination of which would be impossible.

[Lithuanian Constitution as of April 7, 1948]

472 Art. 8. Alongside the socialist system of economy in the Lithuanian SSR the law permits the small private economy of individual peasants, artisans and handicraftsmen and small private industrial and trading enterprises.

● 423 Art. 9. The land occupied by peasant holdings as provided by law is secured for their use free of charge and for an unlimited time.

421 Art. 10. The personal property right of citizens in their incomes and savings from work, in their dwelling houses and subsidiary home enterprises, in articles of domestic economy and use and articles of personal use and convenience, as well as the right of citizens to inherit personal property, is protected by law.

471 Art. 11. The economic life of the Lithuanian SSR is determined and directed by the state national-economic plan, with the aim of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standards of the working people, of consolidating the independence of the USSR and strengthening its defensive capacity.

185

461 Art. 12. Work in the Lithuanian SSR is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

The principle applied in the Lithuanian SSR is that of socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

Chapter II. The State Structure

142 Art. 13. For the purpose of mutual assistance among the Union Republics along economic and political lines, as well as along the line of defence, the Lithuanian SSR voluntarily united with the other equal Soviet Socialist Republics, namely:

The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic,
The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic and
The Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic

in a federal state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Proceeding from the aforesaid, the Lithuanian SSR ensures to the USSR, as represented by its higher organs of state power and organs of state administration, the rights defined in Art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR.

Outside of the spheres set forth in Art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR, the Lithuanian SSR exercises state authority independently, retaining its sovereign rights in full.